



373 POPE (Alexander) AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

Si quid novisti rectius istis,

Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum.—HORAT.

London, printed by W. Lewis in Russell Street, Covent Garden; and sold by W. Taylor, at the Ship in Paternoster Row, etc., 1711. FIRST EDITION, 4to, a good copy in old half calf, £2 10s

This was Pope's FIRST PUBLICATION IN BOOK-FORM, and was issued anonymously, having been written before the author was twenty years old. Of the Poem, Addison says in the Spectator, No. 253, "It is a masterpiece of its kind;" and Dr. Johnson tells us in his Life of Pope, "One of his greatest, though of his earliest works is the 'Essay on Criticism,' which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first critics and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression."

386 POPE (Alexander) AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

Si quid novisti rectius istis,

Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum.—HORAT.

London, printed by W. Lewis in Russell Street, Covent Garden, and sold by W. Taylor at the Ship in Paternoster Row, T. Osborn in Gray's Inn near the Walks, and J. Graves in St. James's Street, 1711. FIRST EDITION, small 4to, a few blank margins mended, otherwise a remarkably fine copy in brown morocco extra, paneled sides, top edges gilt, TOTALLY UNCUT, by RIVIERE & SON, one of the rarest of all Pope's publications, and especially in this state, £28 10s

This was Pope's FIRST PUBLICATION IN BOOK FORM, and was issued anonymously, having been written before the author was twenty years old. Of the Poem, Addison says in the Spectator, No. 253, "It is a masterpiece of its kind;" and Dr. Johnson tells us in his Life of Pope, "One of his greatest, though of his earliest works, is the 'Essay on Criticism,' which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first critics and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression."

an ancient copy sold 23. 6. 04 at Sotheby's £60 (Jackson)

4867 POPE (Alexander) AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

Si quid novisti rectius istis,

Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum.—HORAT.

London: Printed by W. Lewis, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, and sold by W. Taylor at the Ship in Paternoster Row, T. Osborn in Gray's Inn, near the Walks, and J. Graves in St. James's Street, 1711. FIRST EDITION, sm. 4to, a few blank margins mended, otherwise a remarkably fine copy in brown morocco extra, paneled sides, top edges gilt, TOTALLY UNCUT by Riviere & Son, one of the rarest of all Pope's publications, and especially in this state, £25

4868 — Another Copy, 1711. FIRST EDITION, sm. 4to, a fine copy in green morocco extra, paneled sides, gilt edges, by Riviere & Son, £15 15s

This was Pope's first publication in book form, and was issued anonymously, having been written before the author was twenty years old. Of the poem Addison says in the Spectator, No. 253: "It is a masterpiece of its kind"; and Dr. Johnson tells us in his "Life of Pope": "One of his greatest, though of his earliest, works is the 'Essay on Criticism,' which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first critics and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression."

Submittin Ar-91 sh/-

... ..  
... ..  
In even ... .. 1907









A N  
E S S A Y  
O N  
CRITICISM.

---

——— *Si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.*

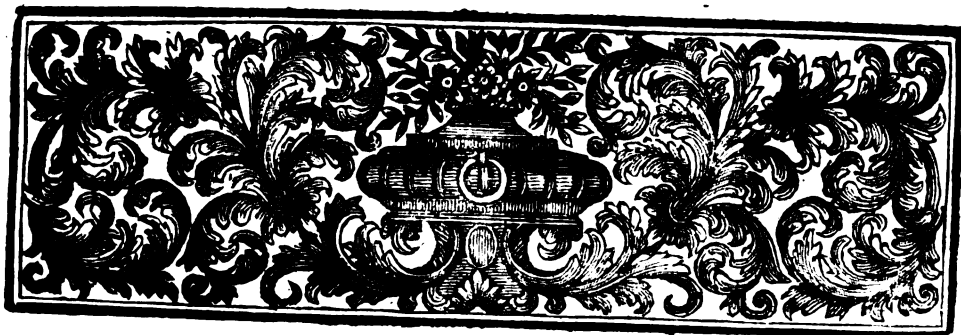
HORAT.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for *W. Lewis* in *Russel-Street, Covent-Garden*; And Sold by  
*W. Taylor* at the *Ship* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, *T. Osborn* in *Grays-Inn*  
near the *Walks*, and *J. Graves* in *St. James's-Street*. M D C C X I.





A N  
E S S A Y  
O N  
C R I T I C I S M.

**T**IS hard to say, if greater Want of Skill  
Appear in *Writing* or in *Judging* ill;  
But, of the two, less dang'rous is th' Offence,  
To tire our *Patience*, than mis-lead our *Sense* :  
Some few in *that*, but Numbers err in *this*,  
Ten Censure wrong for one who Writes amiss ;  
A Fool might once *himself* alone expose,  
Now *One* in *Verse* makes many more in *Prose*.



'Tis with our *Judgments* as our *Watches*, none  
 Go just *alike*, yet each believes his own.  
 In *Poets* as true *Genius* is but rare,  
 True *Taste* as seldom is the *Critick's* Share;  
 Both must alike from Heav'n derive their Light,  
 These *born* to Judge, as well as those to Write.  
 † Let such teach others who themselves excell,  
 And *censure freely* who have *written well*.  
*Authors* are partial to their *Wit*, 'tis true,  
 But are not *Criticks* to their *Judgment* too?

Yet if we look more closely, we shall find  
 \* Most have the *Seeds* of Judgment in their Mind;  
 Nature affords at least a *glimm'ring Light*;  
 The *Lines*, tho' touch'd but faintly, are drawn right.  
 But as the slightest *Sketch*, if justly trac'd,  
 Is by ill *Colouring* but the more disgrac'd,  
 So by *false Learning* is good *Sense* defac'd;  
 Some are bewilder'd in the *Maze* of *Schools*,  
 And some made *Coxcombs* Nature meant but *Fools*.

---

† — De *Pictore*, *Sculptore*, *Fictore*, nisi *Artifex* judicare non potest. Pliny.

\* Omnes tacito quodam sensu, sine ulla arte, aut ratione, qua sint in artibus ac rationibus recta ac prava dijudicant. Cic. de Orat. lib. 3.

In search of *Wit* these lose their *common Sense*,  
 And then turn Criticks in their own Defence.  
 Those hate as *Rivals* all that write; and others  
 But envy *Wits*, as *Eunuchs* envy *Lovers*.  
 All *Fools* have still an Itching to deride,  
 And fain wou'd be upon the *Laughing Side*:  
 If *Mævius* Scribble in *Apollo's* spight,  
 There are, who judge still worse than he can write.

Some have at first for *Wits*, then *Poets* past,  
 Turn'd *Criticks* next, and prov'd plain *Fools* at last;  
 Some neither can for *Wits* nor *Criticks* pass,  
 As heavy Mules are neither *Horse* nor *Ass*.  
 Those half-learn'd *Witlings*, num'rous in our Isle,  
 As half-form'd *Insects* on the Banks of Nile;  
 Unfinish'd Things, one knows not what to call,  
 Their Generation's so *equivocal*:  
 To tell 'em, wou'd a *hundred Tongues* require,  
 Or *one vain Wit's*, that wou'd a hundred tire.

But *you* who seek to give and merit Fame,  
 And justly bear a Critick's noble Name,

Be

Be sure *your self* and your own *Reach* to know,  
How far your *Genius*, *Taste*, and *Learning* go;  
Launch not beyond your *Depth*, but be discreet,  
And mark *that Point* where *Sense* and *Dulness* meet.  
Nature to all things fix'd the *Limits* fit,  
And wisely curb'd proud *Man's* pretending *Wit*:  
As on the *Land* while *here* the *Ocean* gains,  
In *other Parts* it leaves wide *sandy Plains*;  
Thus in the *Soul* while *Memory* prevails,  
The solid *Pow'r* of *Understanding* fails;  
Where *Beams* of warm *Imagination* play,  
The *Memory's* soft *Figures* melt away.  
One *Science* only will one *Genius* fit;  
So *vast* is *Art*, so *narrow* *Human Wit*:  
Not only bounded to *peculiar Arts*,  
But ev'n in *those*, confin'd to *single Parts*.  
Like *Kings* we lose the *Conquests* gain'd before,  
By vain *Ambition* still t'extend them more:  
Each might his *several Province* well command,  
Wou'd all but *stoop* to what they *understand*.

First

First follow NATURE, and your Judgment frame  
By her just Standard, which is still the same:

*Unerring Nature*, still divinely bright,

One *clear, unchang'd*, and *Universal* Light,

Life, Force, and Beauty, must to all impart,

At once the *Source*, and *End*, and *Test* of *Art*.

That *Art* is best which most resembles *Her*;

Which still *presides*, yet never does *Appear*;

In some fair Body thus the sprightly Soul,

With Spirits feeds, with Vigour fills the whole,

Each Motion guides, and ev'ry Nerve sustains;

*It self unseen*, but in th' *Effects*, remains.

There are whom Heav'n has blest with store of Wit,

Yet want as much again to manage it;

For *Wit* and *Judgment* ever are at strife,

Tho' meant each other's Aid, like *Man* and *Wife*.

'Tis more to *guide* than *spur* the Muse's Steed;

Restrain his Fury, than provoke his Speed;

The winged Courser, like a gen'rous Horse,

Shows most true Mettle when you *check* his Course.

Those

Those RULES of old *discover'd*, not *devis'd*,  
 Are *Nature* still, but *Nature Methodiz'd*;  
*Nature*, like *Monarchy*, is but restrain'd  
 By the same *Laws* which first *herself* ordain'd.  
 First learned *Greece* just *Precepts* did indite,  
 When to repress, and when indulge our Flight:  
 High on *Parnassus'* Top her *Sons* she shew'd,  
 And pointed out those arduous *Paths* they trod,  
 Held from afar, aloft, th' *Immortal Prize*,  
 And urg'd the rest by equal *Steps* to rise;  
 From great *Examples* *useful Rules* were giv'n;  
 She drew from *them* what they deriv'd from *Heav'n*,  
 The gen'rous *Critick* fann'd the *Poet's Fire*,  
 And taught the *World*, with *Reason* to *Admire*.  
 Then *Criticism* the *Muses Handmaid* prov'd,  
 To dress her *Charms*, and make her more *belov'd*;  
 But following *Wits* from that *Intention* stray'd;  
 Who cou'd not win the *Mistress*, woo'd the *Maid*,  
 Set up *themselves*, and drove a *separate Trade*.

Against



Against the Poets *their own Arms* they turn'd,  
 Sure to hate most the Men from whom they learn'd.  
 So modern *Pharmacians*, taught the Art  
 By *Doctor's Bills* to play the *Doctor's Part*,  
 Bold in the Practice of *mistaken Rules*,  
 Prescribe, apply, and call their *Masters Books*.  
 Some on the Leaves of ancient Authors prey,  
 Nor Time nor Moths e'er spoil'd so much as they:  
 Some dryly plain, without Invention's Aid,  
 Write dull *Receipts* how Poems may be made:  
 These lost the Sense, their Learning to display,  
 And those explain'd the Meaning quite away.

You then whose Judgment the right Course wou'd steer,  
 Know well each ANCIENT's proper Character,  
 His *Fable*, *Subject*, *Scope* in ev'ry Page,  
*Religion*, *Country*, *Genius* of his Age:  
 Without all these at once before your Eyes,  
 You may *Confound*, but never *Criticize*.  
 Be *Homer's Works* your *Study*, and *Delight*,  
 Read them by Day, and meditate by Night,

B

Thence

Thence form your Judgment, thence your Notions bring,  
 And trace the Muses *upward* to their *Spring* ;  
 Still with *It self compar'd*, his *Text* peruse ;  
 And 'let your *Comment* be the *Mantuan Muse*.

When first great *Maro* in his boundless Mind  
 A Work, t'outlast Immortal *Rome* design'd,  
 Perhaps he seem'd *above* the Critick's Law,  
 And but from *Nature's Fountains* scorn'd to draw :  
 But when t'examine ev'ry Part he came,  
*Nature* and *Homer* were, he found, the *same* :  
 Convinc'd, amaz'd, he checkt the bold Design,  
 And did his Work to Rules as strict confine,  
 As if the *Stagyrite* o'erlook'd each Line.  
 Learn hence for Ancient *Rules* a just Esteem ;  
 To copy *Nature* is to copy *Them*.

Some Beauties yet, no Precepts can declare,  
 For there's a *Happiness* as well as *Care*—  
*Musick* resembles *Poetry*, in each  
 Are *nameless Graces* which no Methods teach,  
 And which a *Master-Hand* alone can reach.

† If

† If, where the *Rules* not far enough extend,  
 (Since *Rules* were made but to promote their End)  
 Some Lucky *LICENCE* answers to the full  
 Th' Intent propos'd, *that Licence* is a *Rule*.  
 Thus *Pegasus*, a nearer way to take,  
 May boldly deviate from the common Track.  
 Great Wits sometimes may gloriously offend,  
 And rise to *Faults* true Criticks dare not mend;  
 From *vulgar Bounds* with brave *Disorder* part,  
 And snatch a *Grace* beyond the Reach of Art,  
 Which, without passing thro' the *Judgment*, gains  
 The *Heart*, and all its End *at once* attains.  
 In *Prospects*, thus, some *Objects* please our Eyes,  
 Which out of Nature's common Order rise,  
 The shapeless *Rock*, or hanging *Precipice*.  
 But Care in Poetry must still be had,  
 It asks *Discretion* ev'n in *running Mad*;

B 2

And

---

† Neque tam sancta sunt ista Præcepta, sed hoc quicquid est, Utilitas excogitavit;  
 Non negabo autem sic utile esse plerumque; verum si eadem illa nobis aliud suadebit  
 utilitas, hanc, relictis magistrorum autoritatibus, sequemur. Quintil. l. 2. cap. 13.

And tho' the *Ancients* thus their *Rules* invade,  
 (As *Kings* dispense with *Laws* Themselves have made)  
*Moderns*, beware ! Or if you must offend  
 Against the *Precept*, ne'er transgress its *End*,  
 Let it be *seldom*, and *compell'd by Need*,  
 And have, at least, *Their Precedent* to plead.  
 The Critick else proceeds without Remorse,  
 Seizes your Fame, and puts his *Laws* in force.

I know there are, to whose presumptuous Thoughts  
 Those *Freer Beauties*, ev'n in *Them*, seem Faults :  
 Some Figures *monstrous* and *mis-shap'd* appear,  
 Consider'd *singly*, or beheld too *near*,  
 Which, but *proportion'd* to their *Light*, or *Place*,  
 Due Distance *reconciles* to Form and Grace.  
 A prudent Chief not always must display  
 His Powr's in *equal Ranks*, and *fair Array*,  
 But with th' *Occasion* and the *Place* comply,  
 Oft *hide* his Force, nay seem sometimes to *Fly*.  
 Those are but *Stratagems* which *Errors* seem,  
 Nor is it *Homer Nods*, but *We* that *Dream*.

Still

Still green with Bays each *ancient* Altar stands,  
Above the reach of *Sacrilegious* Hands,  
Secure from *Flames*, from *Envy's* fiercer Rage,  
Destructive *War*, and all-devouring *Age*.  
See, from *each Clime* the Learn'd their Incense bring;  
Hear, in *all Tongues* Triumphant *Pæans* ring!  
In Praise so just, let ev'ry Voice be join'd,  
And fill the *Gen'ral Chorus* of *Mankind*!  
Hail *Bards Triumphant*! born in *happier Days*;  
*Immortal* Heirs of *Universal* Praise!  
Whose Honours with Increase of *Ages* grow,  
As Streams roll down, *enlarging* as they flow!  
Nations *unborn* your mighty Names shall sound,  
And Worlds applaud that must not yet be found!  
Oh may some Spark of *your Cœlestial* Fire  
The last, the meanest of your *Sorts* inspire,  
(That with weak *Wings*, from far, pursues your *Flights*;  
*Glow*s while he *reads*, but *trembles* as he *writes*)  
To teach vain *Wits* that *Science* little *known*,  
To *admire* Superior *Sense*, and *doubt* their own!



OF all the Causes which conspire to blind  
 Man's erring Judgment, and misguide the Mind,  
 What the weak Head with strongest Byas rules,  
 Is *Pride*, the *never-failing Vice of Fools*.  
 Whatever Nature has in *Worth* deny'd,  
 She gives in large Recruits of *needful Pride*;  
 For as in *Bodies*, thus in *Souls*, we find  
 What wants in *Blood* and *Spirits*, swell'd with *Wind*;  
*Pride*, where Wit fails, steps in to our Defence,  
 And fills up all the *mighty Void of Sense*!  
 If once right Reason drives *that Cloud* away,  
*Truth* breaks upon us with *resistless Day*;  
 Trust not your self; but your Defects to know,  
 Make use of ev'ry *Friend* — and ev'ry *Foe*.

A *little Learning* is a dang'rous Thing;  
 Drink deep, or taste not the *Pierian Spring*:  
 There *shallow Draughts* intoxicate the Brain,  
 And drinking *largely* sobers us again.

Fir'd

Fir'd with the Charms fair *Science* does impart,  
 In *fearless Youth* we tempt the Heights of Art;  
 While from the bounded *Level* of our Mind,  
*Short Views* we take, nor see the *Lengths behind*,  
 But *more advanc'd*, survey with strange Surprise  
 New, distant Scenes of *endless Science* rise:  
 So pleas'd at first, the towering *Alps* we try,  
 Mount o'er the Vales, and seem to tread the Sky;  
 Th' Eternal Snows appear already past,  
 And the first *Clouds* and *Mountains* seem the last:  
 But *those attain'd*, we tremble to survey  
 The growing Labours of the lengthen'd Way,  
 Th' *increasing Prospect tires* our wandering Eyes,  
 Hills peep o'er Hills, and *Alps on Alps* arise!

† A perfect Judge will read each Work of Wit  
 With the same Spirit that its Author writ,  
 Survey the *Whole*, nor seek slight Faults to find;  
 Where *Nature moves*, and *Rapture warms* the Mind;

Not

---

† Diligenter legendum est, ac pæne ad scribendi sollicitudinem: Nec per partes modo scrutanda sunt omnia, sed perfectus liber utique ex Integro resumendus. Quintilian.

Nor lose, for that malignant dull Delight,  
 The gen'rous Pleasure to be charm'd with Wit;  
 But in such Lays as, neither *abb.* nor *flow*,  
*Correctly cold*, and *regularly low*,  
 That shunning Faults, one quiet Tenour keep;  
 We cannot *blame* indeed----but we may *sleep*.  
 In Wit, as Nature, what affects our Hearts  
 Is not th' Exactness of peculiar Parts;  
 'Tis not a *Lip*, or *Eye*, we Beauty call,  
 But the joint Force and full *Refule* of *all*.  
 Thus when we view some well-proportion'd Dome,  
 (The *World's* just Wonder; and ev'n *thine* O *Rome*!)  
 No single Parts unequally surprize;  
 All comes *united* to th' admiring Eyes;  
 No monstrous Height, or Breadth, or Length appear;  
 The *Whole* at once is *Bold*, and *Regular*.

Whoever thinks a faultless Piece to see,  
 Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be,  
 In ev'ry Work regard the *Writer's End*,  
 Since none can compass more than they *Intend*;

And

And if the *Means* be just, the *Conduct* true,  
 Applause, in spite of trivial Faults, is due.  
 As Men of Breeding, oft the Men of Wit,  
 T' avoid *great Errors*, must the *less* commit,  
 Neglect the Rules each *Verbal Critick* lays,  
 For *not* to know some Trifles, is a Praise.  
 Most Criticks fond of some subservient Art;  
 Still make the *Whole* depend upon a *Part*,  
 They talk of *Principles*, but Parts they prize,  
 And All to one lov'd Folly Sacrifice.

Once on a time, *La Mancha's* Knight, they say,  
 A certain *Bard* encountring on the Way,  
 Discours'd in Terms as just, with Looks as Sage,  
 As e'er cou'd D——s, of the Laws o' th' Stage;  
 Concluding all were desp'rate Sots and Fools,  
 That durst depart from *Aristotle's* Rules.  
 Our Author, happy in a Judge so nice,  
 Produc'd his Play, and beg'd the Knight's Advice,  
 Made him observe the *Subject* and the *Plot*,  
 The *Manners*, *Passions*, *Unities*, what not?

All which, exact to Rule were brought about,  
Were but a *Combate in the Lists* left out.

*What! Leave the Combate out?* Exclaims the Knight;  
Yes, or we must renounce the *Stagyrite*.

*Not so by Heav'n* (he answers in a Rage)

*Knights, Squires, and Steeds, must enter on the Stage.*

The Stage can ne'er so vast a Throng contain.

*Then build a New, or act it in a Plain.*

Thus Criticks, of less *Judgment* than *Caprice*,

*Curious*, not *Knowing*, not *exact*, but *nice*,

Form *short Ideas*; and offend in *Arts*

(As most in *Manners*) by a *Love to Parts*.

Some to *Conceit* alone their Taste confine,

And glitt'ring Thoughts struck out at ev'ry Line;

Pleas'd with a Work where nothing's just or fit;

One *glaring Chaos* and *wild Heap of Wit*:

Poets like Painters, thus, unskill'd to trace

The *naked Nature* and the *living Grace*,

With *Gold* and *Jewels* cover ev'ry Part,

And hide with *Ornaments* their *Want of Art*.

† True



† *True Wit* is *Nature* to Advantage dress,  
 What oft was *Thought*, but ne'er before *Express*,  
*Something*, whose Truth convinc'd at Sight we find,  
 That gives us back the Image of our Mind:  
 As Shades more sweetly recommend the Light,  
 So modest Plainness sets off sprightly Wit:  
 For *Works* may have more *Wit* than does 'em good,  
 As *Bodies* perish through Excess of *Blood*.

Others for *Language* all their Care express,  
 And value *Books*, as Women *Men*, for *Dress*:  
 Their Praise is still—*The Stile is excellent*:  
 The *Sense*, they humbly take upon Content.  
*Words* are like *Leaves*; and where they most abound,  
 Much *Fruit* of *Sense* beneath is rarely found.  
*False Eloquence*, like the *Prismatic Glass*,  
 Its gawdy Colours spreads on ev'ry place;  
 The Face of Nature we no more Survey,  
 All glares alike, without *Distinction* gay:

C 2

But

---

† *Naturam intueamur, hanc sequamur; Id facillimè accipiunt animi quod agnos-  
 cunt.* Quintil. lib. 8. c. 3.

But true *Expression*, like th' unchanging *Sun*,  
*Clears*, and *improves* whate'er it shines upon,  
 It *gilds* all Objects, but it *alters* none.

*Expression* is the *Dress* of *Thought*, and still  
 Appears more *decent* as more *suitable*;

A vile *Conceit* in pompous *Style* express'd,  
 Is like a *Clown* in regal *Purple* dress'd;

For different *Styles* with different *Subjects* sort,

As several *Garbs* with *Country*, *Town*, and *Court*.

\* Some by *Old Words* to *Fame* have made *Pretence*;

*Ancients* in *Phrase*, meer *Moderns* in their *Sense*!

Such *labour'd Nothings*, in so *strange* a *Style*,

*Amaze* th' unlearn'd, and make the *Learned Smile*.

Unlucky, as *Fungoso* in the † *Play*,

These *Sparks* with awkward *Vaniry* display

What the *Fine Gentlemen* wore *Yesterday*!

And but so mimick ancient *Wits* at best,

As *Apes* our *Grandfires* in their *Doublets dress'd*.

---

\* *Abolita & abrogata retinere, insolentia-cujusdam est, & frivola in parvis jactantia.* Quint. lib. 1. c. 6.

Opus est ut Verba a vetustate repetita neque crebra sint, neque manifesta, quia nil est odiosius affectatione, nec utique ab ultimis repetita temporibus. Oratio, cujus summa virtus est perspicuitas, quam sit vitiosa si egeat interprete? Ergo ut novarum optima erunt maxime vetera, ita veterum maxime nova. Idem.

† Ben. Johnson's *Every Man in his Humour*.

In Words, as Fashions, the same Rule will hold ;  
Alike Fantastick, if too New, or Old ;  
Be not the first by whom the New are try'd,  
Nor yet the last to lay the Old aside.

\* But most by Numbers judge a Poet's Song,  
And smooth or rough, with such, is right or wrong ;  
In the bright Muse tho' thousand Charms conspire,  
Her Voice is all these tuneful Fools admire,  
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their Ear,  
Not mend their Minds ; as some to Church repair,  
Not for the Doctrine, but the Musick there.  
These Equal Syllables alone require,  
† Tho' oft the Ear the open Vowels tire,  
While Expletives their feeble Aid do join,  
And ten low Words oft creep in one dull Line,  
While they ring round the same unvary'd Chimes,  
With sure Returns of still expected Rhymes.

Where

\* *Quis populi sermo est? quis enim? nisi carmine molli Nunc demum numero fluere, ut per læve severos Effugit iunctura unguis: scit tendere versum, Non secus ac si oculo rubricam dirigat uno.* Persius, Sat. 1.

† *Fugiemus crebras vocalium concursiones, quæ vastam atque biantem orationem reddunt.* Cic. ad Herenn. lib. 4. Vide etiam Quintil. lib. 9. c. 4.

Where-e'er you find *the cooling Western Breeze*,  
 In the next Line, it *whispers thro' the Trees* ;  
 If *Chrystal Streams* with *pleasing Murmurs* creep,  
 The Reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with *Sleep*.  
 Then, at the *last*, and *only* Couplet fraught  
 With some *unmeaning* Thing they call a *Thought*,  
 A *needle's Alexandrine* ends the Song,  
 That like a wounded Snake, drags its slow Length along.  
 Leave such to tune their own dull Rhimes, and know  
 What's *roundly smooth*, or *languishingly slow* ;  
 And praise the *Easie Vigor* of a Line,  
 Where *Denham's* Strength, and *Waller's* Sweetness join.  
 'Tis not enough no Harshness gives Offence,  
 The *Sound* must seem an *Eccho* to the *Sense*.  
 Soft is the Strain when *Zephyr* gently blows,  
 And the *smooth Stream* in *smoother Numbers* flows ;  
 But when loud Surges lash the sounding Shore,  
 The *hoarse, rough Verse* shou'd like the *Torrent* roar.  
 When *Ajax* strives, some Rock's vast Weight to throw,  
 The Line too *labours*, and the Words move *slow* ;

Not

Not so, when swift *Camilla* scours the Plain,  
Flies o'er th' unbending Corn, and skims along the Main.  
Hear how \* *Timotheus*' various Lays surprize,  
And bid Alternate Passions fall and rise!  
While, at each Change, the Son of *Lybian Jove*  
Now burns with Glory, and then melts with Love;  
Now his fierce Eyes with sparkling Fury glow;  
Now Sighs steal out, and Tears begin to flow:  
*Persians* and *Greeks* like Turns of Nature found,  
And the *World's Victor* stood subdu'd by Sound!  
The Pow'r of *Musick* all our Hearts allow;  
And what *Timotheus* was, is *Dryden* now.

Avoid *Extreams*; and shun the Fault of such,  
Who still are pleas'd too little, or too much.  
At ev'ry Trifle scorn to take Offence,  
That always shows *Great Pride*, or *Little Sense*;  
Those Heads as *Stomachs* are not sure the best  
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.

Yet

---

\**Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Musick; An Ode by Mr. Dryden.*

Yet let not each gay *Turn* thy Rapture move,  
 For Fools *Admire*, but Men of Sense *Approve*;  
 As things seem *large* which we thro' *Mists* descry,  
*Dulness* is ever apt to *Magnify*.

Some the *French* Writers, some our *own* despise;  
 The *Ancients* only, or the *Moderns* prize:  
 Thus *Wit*, like *Faith*, by each Man is apply'd  
 To *one small Sect*, and All are *damn'd beside*.  
 Meanly they seek the Blessing to confine,  
 And force *that Sun* but on a *Part* to Shine;  
 Which not alone the *Southern Wit* sublimes,  
 But ripens Spirits in cold *Northern Climes*;  
 Which from the first has shone on *Ages past*,  
 Enlights the *present*, and shall warm the *last*:  
 (Tho' *each* may feel *Increases* and *Decays*,  
 And see now *clearer* and now *darker Days*)  
 Regard not then if *Wit* be *Old* or *New*,  
 But blame the *False*, and value still the *True*.

Some ne'er advance a Judgment of their own,  
 But *catch* the *spreading Notion* of the Town;

They

They reason and conclude by *Precedent*,  
 And own *stale Nonsense* which they ne'er invent.  
 Some judge of Author's *Names*, not *Works*, and then  
 Nor praise nor damn the *Writings*, but the *Men*.  
 Of all this *Servile Herd* the worst is He  
 That in *proud Dulness* joins with *Quality*,  
 A constant Critick at the Great-man's Board,  
 To *fetch and carry* Nonsense for my Lord.  
 What *woful stuff* this Madrigal wou'd be,  
 In some starv'd Hackny Sonneteer, or me?  
 But let a *Lord* once own the *happy Lines*,  
 How the *Wit brightens*! How the *Style refines*!  
 Before *his* sacred Name flies ev'ry Fault,  
 And each *exalted Stanza teems* with *Thought*!  
 The *Vulgar* thus through *Imitation* err;  
 As oft the *Learn'd* by being *Singular*;  
 So much they scorn the Crowd, that if the Throng  
 By *Chance* go right, they *purposely* go wrong;  
 So Schismatics the *dull Believers* quit,  
 And are but damn'd for having *too much Wit*.

D

Some

Some praise at Morning ~~what~~ they blame at Night;  
 But always think the *last* Opinion right.

A Muse by these is like a Mistress us'd,

This hour she's *idoliz'd*, the next *abus'd*,

While their weak Heads, like Towns unfortify'd,

'Twixt Sense and Nonsense daily change their Side.

Ask them the Cause; *They're wiser still*, they say;

And still to Morrow's wiser than to Day.

*We* think our *Fathers* Fools, so *wise* we grow;

Our *wiser Sons*, no doubt, will think *us* so.

Once *School-Divines* our zealous *file* o'erspread;

Who knew most *Sentences* was *deepest* read;

Faith, Gospel, All, seem'd made to be *disputed*,

And none had *Sense enough* to be *Confuted*.

*Scotists* and *Thomists*, now, in Peace remain,

Amidst their *kindred Cobwebs* in *Duck-Lane*.

If *Faith* it self has *diff'rent Dresses* worn,

What wonder *Modes* in *Wit* shou'd take their Turn?

Oft, leaving what is Natural and fit,

The *current Folly* proves our *ready Wit*,

And



And Authors think their Reputation safe,  
Which lives as long as *Fools* are pleas'd to *Laugh*.

Some valuing those of their own *Side*, or *Mind*,  
Still make themselves the measure of Mankind;  
Fondly we think we honour Merit then,  
When we but praise *Our selves* in *Other Men*.  
Parties in *Wit* attend on those of *State*,  
And publick Faction doubles private Hate.  
*Pride*, *Malice*, *Folly*, against *Dryden* rose,  
In various Shapes of *Parsons*, *Criticks*, *Beaus*;  
But *Sense* surviv'd, when *merry Jests* were past;  
For rising Merit will *buoy up* at last.

Might he return, and bless once more our Eyes,  
New *Bl—s* and new *M—s* must arise;  
Nay shou'd great *Homer* lift his awful Head,  
*Zoilus* again would start up from the Dead.  
*Envy* will *Merit* as its *Shade* pursue,  
But like a Shadow, proves the *Substance* too;  
For envy'd *Wit*, like *Sol* Eclips'd, makes known  
Th' opposing *Body's* Grossness, not its own.

When first that Sun too powerful Beams displays,  
 It draws up Vapours which obscure its Rays;  
 But ev'n those Clouds at last adorn its Way,  
 Reflect new Glories, and augment the Day.

Be thou the *first* true Merit to befriend;  
 His Praise is lost, who stays till *All* commend;  
 Short is the Date, alas, of *Modern Rhymes*;  
 And 'tis but just to let 'em live *betimes*.  
 No longer now that Golden Age appears,  
 When *Patriarch-Wits* surviv'd a *thousand Tears*;  
 Now Length of *Fame* (our *second Life*) is lost,  
 And bare Threescore is all ev'n That can boast:  
 Our Sons their Father's *failing Language* see,  
 And such as *Chaucer* is, shall *Dryden* be.  
 So when the faithful *Pencil* has design'd  
 Some *fair Idea* of the Master's Mind,  
 Where a *new World* leaps out at his command,  
 And ready Nature waits upon his Hand;  
 When the ripe Colours *soften* and *unite*,  
 And sweetly *melt* into just Shade and Light,

When

When mellowing Time does full Perfection give,  
And each Bold Figure just begins to *Live*;  
The *treach'rous Colours* in few Years decay,  
And all the bright Creation fades away!

Unhappy *Wit*, like most mistaken Things,  
Repay's not half that *Envy* which it brings:  
In *Youth* alone its empty Praise we boast,  
But soon the Short-liv'd Vanity is lost!  
Like some fair *Flow'r* that in the *Spring* does rise,  
And gaily Blooms, but ev'n in blooming *Dies*.  
What is this *Wit* that does our Cares employ?  
The *Owner's Wife*, that *other Men* enjoy,  
The more his *Trouble* as the more *admir'd*;  
Where *wanted*, scorn'd, and envy'd where *acquir'd*;  
Maintain'd with *Pains*, but forfeited with *Ease*;  
Sure *some* to *vex*, but never *all* to *please*;  
'Tis what the *Vicious* fear, the *Virtuous* shun;  
By *Fools* 'tis hated, and by *Knaves* undone!  
Too much does *Wit* from *Ign'rance* undergo,  
Ah let not *Learning* too commence its Foe!

of

Of old, those found Rewards who cou'd excel,  
And such were Prais'd who but endeavour'd well :  
Tho' Triumphs were to Generals only due,  
Crowns were reserv'd to grace the Soldiers too.  
Now those that reach Parnassus' lofty Crown,  
Employ their Pains to spurn some others down ;  
And while Self-Love each jealous Writer rules,  
Contending Wits become the Sport of Fools :  
But still the Worst with most Regret commend,  
And each Ill Author is as bad a Friend.  
To what base Ends, and by what abject Ways,  
Are Mortals urg'd by Sacred Lust of Praise ?  
Ah ne'er so dire a Thirst of Glory boast,  
Nor in the Critick let the Man be lost !  
Good-Nature and Good-Sense must ever join ;  
To Err is Humane ; to Forgive, Divine.  
But if in Noble Minds some Dregs remain,  
Not yet purg'd off, of Spleen and low'r Dildain,  
Discharge that Rage on more Provoking Crimes,  
Nor fear a Dearth in these Flagitious Times.

No

No Pardon vile *Obscenity* should find,  
Tho' *Wit* and *Art* conspire to move your Mind ;  
But *Dulness* with *Obscenity* must prove  
As Shameful sure as *Impotence* in *Love*.  
In the fat Age of Pleasure, Wealth, and Ease,  
Sprung the rank Weed, and thriv'd with large Increase ;  
When *Love* was all an easy Monarch's Care ;  
Seldom at *Council*, never in a *War* :  
*Filts* rul'd the State, and Statesmen *Farces* writ ;  
Nay *Wits* had *Pensions*, and young *Lords* had *Wit* :  
The Fair fate panting at a *Courtier's Play*,  
And not a Mask went *un-improv'd* away :  
The modest Fan was lifted up no more,  
And Virgins *smil'd* at what they *blush'd* before —  
The following Licence of a Foreign Reign  
Did all the Dregs of bold *Socinus* drain ;  
Then *first* the *Belgian Morals* were extoll'd ;  
We their *Religion* had, and they our *Gold* :  
Then Unbelieving Priests reform'd the Nation,  
And taught more *Pleasant Methods* of Salvation ;

Where

Where Heav'n's Free Subjects might their *Rights* dispute,  
 Left God himself shou'd seem too *Absolute*.  
*Pulpits* their *Sacred Satire* learn'd to spare,  
 And Vice *admir'd* to find a *Flatt'rer* there !  
 Encourag'd thus, Witt's *Titans* brav'd the Skies,  
 And the Press groan'd with Licenc'd *Blasphemies* —  
 These Monsters, Criticks ! with your Darts engage,  
 Here point your Thunder, and exhaust your Rage !  
 Yet shun their Fault, who, *Scandalously nice*,  
 Will needs *mistake* an Author into Vice ;  
 All seems Infected that th'Infected spy,  
 As all looks yellow to the Jaundic'd Eye.

Learn then what *MORALS* Criticks ought to show,  
 For 'tis but *half* a *Judge's Task*, to *Know*.  
 'Tis not enough, Wit, Art, and Learning join ;  
 In all you speak, let Truth and Candor shine :  
 That not alone what to your *Judgment's* due,  
 All may allow ; but seek your *Friendship* too.

Be

Be *silent* always when you *doubt* your Sense;  
*Speak* when you're *sure*, yet speak with *Diffidence*;  
 Some positive persisting Fops we know,  
 That, if *once wrong*, will needs be *always so*;  
 But you, with Pleasure own your Errors past,  
 And make each Day a *Critick* on the last.

'Tis not enough your Counsel still be *true*,  
*Blunt Truths* more Mischief than *nice Falshoods* do;  
 Men must be *taught* as if you taught them *not*;  
 And Things *ne'er known* propos'd as Things *forgot*:  
 Without *Good Breeding*, *Truth* is not approv'd,  
 That only makes *Superior Sense* *below'd*.

Be Niggards of Advice on no Pretence;  
 For the *worst Avarice* is that of *Sense*:  
 With mean Complacence ne'er betray your Trust,  
 Nor be so *Civil* as to prove *Unjust*;  
 Fear not the Anger of the Wise to raise;  
 Those best can *bear Reproof*, who merit *Praise*.

E

'Twere

'Twere well, might Criticks still this Freedom take;  
But *Appius* reddens at each Word you speak,  
And *stares, Tremendous!* with a *threatning Eye*,  
Like some *fierce Tyrant* in *Old Tapestry!*  
Fear most to tax an *Honourable Fool*,  
Whose Right it is, *uncensur'd* to be dull;  
Such without *Wit* are Poets when they please,  
As without *Learning* they can take *Degrees*.  
Leave dang'rous *Truths* to unsuccessful *Satyrs*,  
And *Flattery* to fulsome *Dedicators*,  
Whom, when they *Praise*, the World believes no more,  
Than when they promise to give *Scribbling* o'er.  
'Tis best sometimes your Censure to restrain,  
And *charitably* let dull Fools be *vain*:  
Your Silence there is better than your *Spite*,  
For who can *rail* so long as they can *write*?  
Still humming on, their old dull Course they keep,  
And *lask'd* so long, like *Tops*, are lask'd *asleep*.

False



*False Steps* but help them to renew the Race,

As after *Stumbling*, Jades will *mend* their Pace.

What Crouds of these, impenitently bold,

In *Sounds* and jingling *Syllables* grown old,

Still *run on* Poets in a raging Vein,

Ev'n to the Dregs and *Squeezings* of the Brain;

Strain out the last, dull droppings of their Sense,

And Rhyme with all the *Rage* of *Impotence*!

Such shameless *Bards* we have; and yet 'tis true,

There are as mad, abandon'd *Criticks* too.

\* The Bookful Blockhead, ignorantly read,

With *Loads* of *Learned Lumber* in his Head,

With his own Tongue still edifies his Ears,

And always *Listening to Himself* appears.

All Books he reads, and all he reads assails,

From *Dryden's Fables* down to D——y's *Tales*.

E 2 With

---

\* *Nilil pejus est iis, qui paullum aliquid ultra primas litteras progressi, falsam sibi scientiæ persuasionem induerunt: Nam & cedere præcipiendi peritis indignantur, & velut jure quodam potestatis, quo ferè hoc hominum genus intumescit, imperiosi, atque interim se viuentes, Stultitiam suam perdocent.* Quintil. lib. 1. ch. 1.

With *him*, most Authors steal their Works, or buy;  
*Garth* did not write his own *Dispensary*.

- Name a new *Play*, and *he's* the Poet's *Friend*,  
 Nay show'd his Faults—but when wou'd Poets mend?  
 No Place so Sacred from such Fops is barr'd,  
 Nor is *Paul's Church* more safe than *Paul's Church-yard*:  
 Nay, run to *Altars*; *there* they'll talk you dead;  
 For *Fools* rush in where *Angels* fear to tread.  
 Distrustful *Sense* with modest Caution speaks;  
 It still *looks home*, and *short Excursions* makes;  
 But *ratling Nonsense* in full *Vollies* breaks;  
 And never shock'd, and never turn'd aside,  
*Bursts out*, resistless, with a thundring Tyde!

But where's the Man, who Counsel *can* bestow,  
 Still *pleas'd* to teach, and yet not *proud* to know?  
 Unbias'd, or by *Favour* or by *Spite*;  
 Not *dully prepossess'd*, or *blindly right*;

Tho'

Tho' Learn'd, well-bred; and tho' well-bred, sincere;  
Modestly bold, and Humanly severe?

Who to a *Friend* his Faults can freely show,  
And gladly praise the Merit of a *Foe*?

Blest with a *Taste* exact, yet unconfin'd;

A *Knowledge* both of *Books* and *Humankind*;

*Gen'rous Converse*; a *Soul* exempt from *Pride*;

And *Love to Praise*, with *Reason* on his Side?

Such once were *Criticks*, such the Happy *Few*,  
*Athens* and *Rome* in better Ages knew.

The mighty *Stagyrite* first left the Shore,

Spread all his Sails, and durst the Deeps explore;

He steer'd securely, and discover'd far,

*Led* by the Light of the *Mæonian Star*.

Not only *Nature* did his Laws obey,

But *Fancy's* boundless Empire own'd his Sway.

Poets, a *Race* long unconfin'd and free,

Still fond and proud of *Savage Liberty*,

Re-

Receiv'd his Rules, and stood convinc'd 'twas fit  
Who conquer'd *Nature*, shou'd preside o'er *Wit*.

*Horace* still charms with graceful Negligence,  
And without Method *talks* us into Sense,  
Does like a *Friend* familiarly convey  
The truest *Notions* in the *easiest* way.

He, who Supream in Judgment, as in Wit,  
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,  
Yet judg'd with *Coolness* tho' he sung with *Fire*;  
His *Precepts* teach but what his *Works* inspire.  
Our *Criticks* take a contrary Extream,  
They judge with *Fury*, but they write with *Fle'me*;  
Nor suffers *Horace* more in wrong *Translations*  
By *Wits*, than *Criticks* in as wrong *Quotations*.

Fancy and Art in gay *Petronius* please,  
The *Scholar's* Learning, and the *Courtier's* Ease.

In grave *Quintilian's* copious Work we find  
The justest Rules, and clearest Method join'd;

Thus

Thus *useful Arms* in Magazines we place,  
 All rang'd in *Order*, and dispos'd with *Grace*,  
 Nor thus alone the Curious Eye to please,  
 But to be *found*, when Need requires, with *Ease*.

The *Muses* sure *Longinus* did inspire,  
 And blest *their Critick* with a *Poet's Fire*.  
 An ardent *Judge*, that Zealous in his Trust,  
 With *Warmth* gives Sentence, yet is always *Just*;  
 Whose *own Example* strengthens all his *Laws*,  
 And *Is himself* that great *Sublime* he draws.

Thus long succeeding Criticks justly reign'd,  
*Licence* repress'd, and *useful Laws* ordain'd;  
*Learning* and *Rome* alike in Empire grew,  
 And *Arts* still follow'd where her *Eagles* flew;  
 From the same Foes, at last, both felt their Doom,  
 And the same Age saw *Learning* fall, and *Rome*.  
 With *Tyranny*, then *Superstition* join'd,  
 As that the *Body*, this enslav'd the *Mind*;

All

All was *Believ'd*, but nothing *understood*,  
 And to be *dull* was constru'd to be *good* ;  
 A *second* Deluge Learning thus o'er-run,  
 And the *Monks* finish'd what the *Goths* begun.

At length, *Erasmus*, that *great*, *injur'd* Name,  
 (The *Glory* of the Priesthood, and the *Shame* !)  
 Stemmi'd the wild *Torrent* of a *barb'rous* Age,  
 And drove those *Holy Vandals* off the Stage.

But see ! each *Muse*, in *Leo's* Golden Days,  
*Starts* from her Trance, and trims her wither'd Bays !  
*Rome's* ancient *Genius*, o'er its *Ruins* spread,  
 Shakes off the *Dust*, and rears his rev'rend Head !  
 Then *Sculpture* and her *Sister-Arts* revive ;  
*Stones* leap'd to *Form*, and *Rocks* began to *live* ;  
 With *sweeter* Notes each *rising Temple* rung ;  
 A *Raphael* painted, and a † *Vida* sung !

Im-

---

† M. Hieronymus Vida, an excellent Latin Poet, who writ an *Art of Poetry* in Verse.

Immortal *Vida* ! on whose honour'd Brow

The Poet's *Bays* and Critick's *Ivy* grow :

*Cremona* now shall ever boast thy Name,

As next in Place to *Mantua*, next in Fame !

But soon by Impious Arms from *Latium* chas'd,

Their *ancient Bounds* the banish'd Muses past ;

Thence Arts o'er all the *Northern World* advance ;

But *Critic Learning* flourish'd most in *France*.

The *Rules*, a Nation born to serve, obeys,

And *Boileau* still in Right of *Horace* sways.

But we, brave *Britains*, *Foreign Laws* despis'd,

And kept *unconquer'd*, and *unciviliz'd*,

Fierce for the *Liberties of Wit*, and bold,

We still defy'd the *Romans*, as of old.

Yet *some* there were, among the *founder Few*

Of those who *less presum'd*, and *better knew*,

Who durst assert the *juster Ancient Cause*,  
And here restor'd Wit's *Fundamental Laws*.  
Such was Roscomon — not more *learn'd* than *good*;  
With Manners gen'rous as his Noble Blood;  
To him the Wit of *Greece* and *Rome* was known,  
And ev'ry Author's *Merit*, but his own.  
Such late was *Walsh*, — the Muses Judge and Friend,  
Who justly knew to blame or to commend;  
To Failings *mild*, but *zealous* for Desert;  
The *clearest Head*, and the *sincere Heart*.  
This humble Praise, lamented *Shade*! receive,  
This Praise at least a grateful Muse may give!  
The Muse, whose early Voice you taught to Sing,  
Prescrib'd her Heights, and prun'd her tender Wing,  
(Her Guide now lost) no more attempts to *rise*,  
But in low Numbers short Excursions tries:

Con-



Content, if hence th' Unlearn'd their Wants may view,  
The Learn'd reflect on what before they knew:  
Careless of *Censure*, nor too fond of *Fame*,  
Still pleas'd to *praise*, yet not afraid to *blame*,  
Averse alike to *Flatter*, or *Offend*,  
Not *free* from Faults, nor yet too vain to *mend*.

FINIS.



10-11-1911

10-11-1911





BODLEIAN LIBRARY

*The gift of*

*Miss Emma F. I. Dunston*

